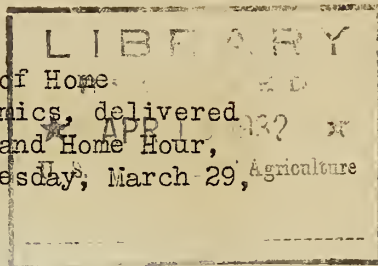


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THE HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR



A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Wells A. Sherman, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, March 29, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

Ever since the March blizzards struck us four weeks ago, we've heard rumors of the damage done to vegetable crops in the Southern Atlantic States and along the Gulf of Mexico.

So I've asked Mr. Wells A. Sherman of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to give us a brief review of the fresh vegetable market today.

I'm sure we can buy more intelligently if we know how much the recent storms have affected market supplies and prices. So, Mr. Sherman, would you set us straight on that, first off?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, in the first place the recent freezes will relieve us prudent buyers from some of our temptations. First of all, we'll not be tempted to buy our first strawberries until several weeks later than we would have, barring the cold wave. A few scattering carloads are still coming from Florida and Louisiana, but the cold wave killed most of the blossoms and many of the young berries in Louisiana. We shall probably have to wait three or four weeks for the peak of the crop from Louisiana and the nearby Gulf States. But most of us have to wait anyway until May and June when the big commercial crop comes on the market from the Northern border of Dixie. So far as we know the strawberry crop there was not seriously hurt.

Snap beans have been very largely killed, along with the early plantings of peppers, squash, eggplant, and cucumbers. Peas can stand a good deal of frost, and since so many of the snap beans have been killed the difference in price between peas and beans may be less than usual. By comparison peas will not seem so much of a luxury, while we may find green beans moving up into the luxury class, or at least alongside of asparagus.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, we don't mind waiting a little for strawberries if we know they are coming. Now, what about the asparagus crop, Mr. Sherman? And can you tell us, while you're at it, why asparagus is generally almost in the class of luxury vegetables? It's easy to grow, isn't it?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, asparagus will live almost anywhere and send up a few stalks, but commercial production is confined to river bottoms or soft, sandy soils, naturally rich or very well fertilized. Now, asparagus requires a lot of work. Besides, it occupies the ground all the time. You can't raise a succession of crops on an asparagus patch. And after all this expense in land and labor, asparagus does not return a great many bushels or hundredweight of stalks per acre. So it seems to me that asparagus is likely to remain on the edge of the luxury class. But last year's big crop in California and along the Atlantic Coast has left a heavy carry over of canned asparagus on the shelves, and it is likely that as much fresh asparagus will be shipped this year as will bring the growers even a small margin over the costs of cutting and shipping.

(over)

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, I'm glad there's going to be plenty of fresh asparagus anyway. It seems to me one of the few tokens of spring left on the fresh vegetable list, now that we get green peas all winter from Mexico, and forced rhubarb in January from Puget Sound, and spinach the year round from one place after another. By the way, why are onions so high these days?

MR. SHERMAN: Onions are high for the simple reason that they are very scarce. The cold weather has probably set the Texas Bermuda onion crop back a little and they will come on a hungry market. So we shall probably have rather high-priced onions until the height of the Texas season is reached, in the latter part of April or the first of May.

Carrots are also high in spite of fairly liberal winter shipments of bunched stock from California and Texas. The freeze has affected Florida celery and the price has jumped above that of last year. Lettuce prices are about the same. Cucumbers were almost entirely wiped out. So those of us who want to fill our market baskets without too heavy a drain on the purse may find salad vegetables rather high. If we do, I suggest we use more apples. We have plenty of apples of good quality in cold storage to supply everybody for the rest of the season, and apples can easily take the place of some of our green vegetables for a few weeks at least.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, that's an excellent idea, Mr. Sherman. Scalloped apples, fried apples, even hot baked apples are just as good as a vegetable with the main course of a meal, if they are sweetened only slightly. And there's nothing better in salads than crisp, tart, sliced apples.

Thank you, Mr. Sherman, for all this helpful market news about vegetables.

Now next week, Miss Mary Rokahr will be here with me to tell you about some of the interesting work in household budgets conducted through the Extension Service. Goodbye, for this time.